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Message Text

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PAGE 01 PORT A 00698 250309Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 /076 W
----------033006 250319Z /70
P R 241620Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7617
INFO AMEMBASSY MEXICO
AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
USIA WASHDC
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SHUM, PINS, PORG, HA
SUBJECT: INTERAMERICAN PRESS ASSOCIATION (IAPA) INQUIRY ON
PRESS FREEDOM

REF: (A) PORT AU PRINCE 0616 (NOTAL), (B) USIS FM #13, 10/26/77
(NOTAL)

1. WILLIAM LANDREY AND ALEX MALDONADO, MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE INTERAMERICAN PRESS ASSOCIATION, HAVE BEEN INVESTIGATING THE STATUS OF PRESS FREEDOM IN HAITI SINCE FEBRUARY 19. THEY INTERVIEWED A BROAD RANGE OF NEWSPAPER AND BROADCAST JOURNALISTS AND MET WITH AMBASSADOR, VARIOUS U.S. EMBASSY OFFICERS, GERMAN AMBASSADOR, FRENCH AND GERMAN PRESS ATTACHES, AND PAPAL NUNCIO. THEY ARE SCHEDULED TO SEE PRESIDENT JEAN-CLAUDE DUVALIER TODAY (FEBRUARY 24). VISIT HAS BEEN WIDELY REPORTED.

2. LANDREY AND MALDONADO HAVE INDICATED THAT THEIR REPORT WOULD PROBABLY CONCLUDE THAT ALTHOUGH HAITIAN PRESS IS STILL NOT
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PAGE 02 PORT A 00698 250309Z

FREE, THERE HAS BEEN AN ENCOURAGING TREND TOWARD FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION IN RECENT YEARS. THEY BELIEVE THAT PRESIDENT DUVALIER DOES NOT HAVE A FREE HAND TO PURSUE THE POLICY OF "LIBERALIZATION" TO WHICH HE IS PUBLICLY COMMITTED BUT THAT THE IAPA SHOULD CONTINUE TO MONITOR AND ENCOURAGE MODERATION AND LIBERALIZATION. AWARE OF HAITI'S HISTORICAL ISOLATION, THEY WILL PROBABLY RECOMMEND SUSTAINED IAPA INTEREST IN AND

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IMPROVED COMMUNICATIONS WITH HAITI.

3. REPORT WILL BE PRESENTED FEBRUARY 28 AT CANCUN, MEXICO MEETING OF THE IAPA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND PRESS FREEDOM COMMITTEE, AND THEREAFTER MADE PUBLIC. LANDREY AND MALDONADO, FEARING THAT THEIR BALANCED AND CONSTRUCTIVE REPORT MIGHT BE DISTORTED BY THE MEDIA, PLAN TO SEND COPIES TO VARIOUS RESPONSIBLE HAITIAN JOURNALISTS, TO THIS EMBASSY, AND TO THE IAHRC.

4. ANALYSIS OF IMPACT OF VISIT AND REPORT WILL FOLLOW.
JONES

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